


VISUALISATION TECHNIQUES

WHAT

Make a visual representation of an idea, process or structure. Some tools stimulate convergent thinking, others divergent thinking.

WHEN TO USE

- **Stage(s):** Can be used in any stage
- **Goal:** Interrogate existing knowledge, create new knowledge & ideas
- **Type:** Participation & co-creation tool
- **Time & Effort:** 1-2 hrs 

HOW TO USE

- **Mind Map:** Structures ideas in a way that provides overview and detail, stimulates divergent thinking
- **Venn diagram:** Draw partially overlapping circles, write similarities in the overlapping parts and what is unique in the parts belonging to one circle. Illustrates differences, similarities and relations. Provides an overview and Stimulates convergent thinking
- **Tree diagram:** Draw a tree, the roots represent the inputs and the leaves the outputs. Match roots and leaves to reflect the hierarchy or consequences of decisions. Stimulates convergent thinking
- **2by2 matrix:** Categorizes a system by two simple variables resulting in four clusters. Stimulates divergent thinking
- **Life cycle diagram:** Maps a process into phases (introduction, growth, maturity and decline). Stimulates convergent thinking and gives overview.

VISUALISATION TECHNIQUES

STRENGTHS

- Can be done alone or in group.
- Helps to clarify complex issues.
- Different visualisations possible so you can adapt this to your situation.
- Making a visual representation forces you to clear out ambiguity and come to the essence of an issue.

WEAKNESSES

- Important to choose the right visualisation technique for the right purpose.
- Not a goal in itself but a way to understand a process or system.
- These tools are for you to explore ideas, systems or processes. They are not necessarily suited to communicate your ideas to others!

References:

A Periodic Table of Visualization Methods (visual-literacy.org)
Visualizations That Really Work (hbr.org)
Visual Reminders – MSP Guide